

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1. As an employer, SHAL has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees and other people who might be affected by our business. We must ensure that workers and others are protected from anything that may cause harm, effectively controlling any risks to injury or health that could arise in the workplace. Portable electrical equipment could cause an electric shock or burn, or fire due to damage, wear or misuse.
- 1.2. This policy sets out SHAL's approach to the testing of portable appliances to ensure that electrical equipment with the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition in compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. These require that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. However, the Regulations do not specify what needs to be done, by whom or how frequently (i.e. they don't make inspection or testing of electrical appliances a legal requirement, nor do they make it a legal requirement to undertake this annually).
- 1.3. Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use. Most electrical safety defects can be found by visual examination, but some types of defect can only be found by testing.
- 1.4. This policy covers electrical portable equipment used by SHAL employees in the office or when working in tenants' homes. e.g. electric drills, extension leads, office equipment, floor cleaners, electric kettle.
- 1.5. SHAL employs an electrical contractor to carry out inspections and maintenance in its premises. However, SHAL still has overall responsibility for complying with the law as an employer and as a landlord.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The objective of this policy is to provide assurance that SHAL Housing is properly managing the key risks arising out of the management of landlord and employer health and safety, specifically in the area of electrical safety at work.
- 2.2. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. The Regulations require that electrical systems and equipment must be maintained, so far as reasonably practicable, to prevent danger. This requirement covers all items of electrical equipment including fixed or portable equipment.
- 2.3. SHAL therefore selects precautions appropriate to the risk. The likelihood of accidents occurring, and their severity will vary depending on the type of electrical equipment, the way in which it is used and the environment it is used in. Control of risks arising from the use of portable electrical equipment are based on risk assessment. Hazards within the workplace are identified and sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks are put in place.

3. Details

- 3.1. This policy is the method by which SHAL gives assurance that it has identified the hazards with regards to portable appliances and put in place reasonable controls to manage and mitigate the risks of harm.
- 3.2. A significant part of the mitigation of the risk is that every employee will visually check the equipment they are using to ensure that there are no visible signs of wear and tear and to use the equipment in line with manufacturer's instructions and being conscious of safety. The following indicates that the equipment is not in sound condition:
 - 3.2.1. damage (apart from light scuffing) to the supply cable, including fraying or cuts
 - 3.2.2. damage to the plug or connector, e.g. the casing is cracking, or the pins are bent
 - 3.2.3. inadequate joints, including taped joints in the cable

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- 3.2.4. the outer sheath of the cable is not effectively secured where it enters the plug or the equipment. Evidence would be if the coloured insulation of the internal cable cores were showing
- 3.2.5. the equipment has been subjected to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. it is wet or excessively contaminated
- 3.2.6. damage to the external casing of the equipment
- 3.2.7. loose parts or screws
- 3.2.8. evidence of overheating (scorch marks)
- 3.3. A user check should be made when the equipment is taken into use and during use. Any faults should be reported to the relevant manager and the equipment taken out of use immediately. Effective steps should be taken to ensure that the equipment is
 - 3.3.1. not used again until it is repaired by a person competent to carry out the task (e.g.
 - 3.3.2. the defective equipment could be labelled as 'faulty' and if it has a rewirable plug this could be removed).
- 3.4. SHAL has taken into consideration the following factors when assessing the risk in relation to portable appliances:
 - 3.4.1. Type of equipment – all portable appliances are earthed double insulated equipment
 - 3.4.2. Handheld – handheld equipment presents a greater degree of risk because, if it does develop a dangerous fault, the person holding it will almost certainly receive an electric shock
 - 3.4.3. Manufacturer's recommendations – these must be followed by all employees
 - 3.4.4. Initial integrity and soundness of the equipment – employees should visually check the equipment they are using and if they are concerned about its soundness, they must not use it

- 3.4.5. Age, frequency of use and duty cycle of equipment – portable appliances are replaced in accordance with the depreciation life
- 3.4.6. Working environment (e.g. wet or dusty) or likelihood of mechanical damage – individual risk assessments are carried out in relation to working in tenants’ homes by the repairs team
- 3.4.7. Foreseeable misuse of the equipment – e.g. is the equipment allocated to a named individual or shared by several individuals
- 3.4.8. Effects of repair or modification – these will be carried out only by competent people
- 3.4.9. Analysis of previous records of maintenance, formal visual inspection and combined inspection and testing
- 3.5. Portable electrical equipment should only be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, for its intended purpose, and in the environment it was designed and constructed for.
- 3.6. All SHAL’s power tools are cordless. They are to be purchased from SHAL’s identified supplier. They will be visually inspected as part of the site and van checks carried out by SHAL’s Health and Safety advisor on a regular basis. The visual inspection will cover:
 - 3.6.1. whether the electrical equipment is being used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions
 - 3.6.2. whether the equipment is suitable for the job
 - 3.6.3. any change of circumstances
 - 3.6.4. whether the user has reported any issues.
- 3.7. PAT testing is carried out on all power tools annually.
- 3.8. The use of an individual’s own tools must be authorised by the Maintenance Manager. The tools must be PAT tested with SHAL tools. The aim of these checks is to determine whether the equipment is fully serviceable or whether remedial action is necessary to make sure it is safe to use. The Maintenance Manager will act where faults are found.

- 3.9. Equipment brought into the office by employees will be visually inspected and added to the maintenance Plan.
- 3.10. Equipment that fails a user check, a formal visual inspection or, where relevant, a combined inspection and test should not be used until it is repaired by a competent person.
- 3.11. Business equipment (such as computers, printers, photocopiers etc) does not present the same level of risk as other equipment (such as electric drills) providing the leads and plugs are protected from mechanical damage or stress. Movement, and therefore damage through being moved, is less likely to occur, and the equipment is often double insulated and used in a dry, clean environment with non-conducting floors
- 3.12. Some faults, such as loss of earth integrity (e.g. broken earth wire within a flexible cable), deterioration of insulation integrity, or contamination of internal and external surfaces, cannot be detected by visual examination alone. Such faults can only be reliably detected by a combined visual inspection and test. This is carried out periodically to back up the checks and inspections where:
 - 3.12.1. there is reason to suppose the equipment may be defective and this
 - 3.12.2. cannot be confirmed by visual examination
 - 3.12.3. after any repair, modification or similar work or
 - 3.12.4. at periods appropriate to the equipment, the manner and frequency of use and the environment.
- 3.13. The inspection carried out in conjunction with testing will include checking:
 - 3.13.1. the correct polarity of supply cables
 - 3.13.2. the correct fusing
 - 3.13.3. effective termination of cables and cores
 - 3.13.4. that the equipment is suitable for its environment
- 3.14. SHAL employs our current electrical contractor to undertake this work. The contractor will label equipment to indicate that the equipment has been tested satisfactorily, i.e. has been passed as safe, and when it was tested. The label will

not indicate the next test due date. This decision is made by the CEO based on a risk assessment.

3.15. PAT testing of power tools is undertaken annually on 1 September.

3.16. PAT testing of Office equipment is undertaken bi-annually on 1 April.

4. Outcomes

4.1. Employees understand the need to assess the risk related to portable appliances based on a risk assessment taking into consideration the type of equipment, how it is used, its age and condition etc

4.2. Employees proactively manage the risk associated with portable electrical appliances

4.3. SHAL complies with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

4.4. All employees, contractors and tenants are safe from harm by electric shock, burning etc

5. Consultation

5.1. HSE guidance

5.2. Health and Safety Committee

5.3. Maintenance Team

5.4. Unison

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1. In carrying out a risk assessment SHAL will have consideration of any characteristic of an individual which may mean that we need to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the testing of portable appliances.

7. Value for Money

7.1. In making arrangements for the management of risk with regards to the testing of appliances and other checks SHAL will do what is reasonably practical and seek to ensure that it does not extend arrangements which are not required and are therefore at a cost which could be avoided.

8. Owner

8.1. Maintenance Manager

9. Version and Revisions

9.1. This policy will be reviewed every 1 year(s).

9.2. Revisions

New version	Date	Revision details